

## **PROPOSAL REGARDING THEOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE PHILIPPINES (TAP)**

### Introduction

Over the last number of years, we have had contact with Rev. Glem Melo from Cagayan de Oro, on the island of Mindanao, in the Philippines. Rev. Melo is asking for assistance with theological education in order to spread the Reformed faith in the Philippines. He and his mission congregation are currently in discussions with the Free Reformed Church of Baldivis, Western Australia. They are hoping that the Baldivis FRCA will provide ecclesiastical supervision, while we (in cooperation with Baldivis) will assist with theological training.

Rev. Melo first met with Dr. G. Visscher in Singapore in 2010. A favourable report was given of this meeting. Rev. Melo has also visited the FRCA and welcomed an FRCA delegation to Cagayan de Oro. He came to Canada and visited with us last summer. Finally, Rev. Bredenhof travelled to the Philippines last October and spent five intensive days with Rev. Melo and some of his contacts. Besides all this, there have been extensive discussions. Our conclusion from all this contact is that there is no question about the integrity or motives of Rev. Melo. The time is right to move forward and extend a helping hand to Rev. Melo and others in the Philippines who want to advance the Reformed faith.

### Proposal

We propose that:

- We establish a project entitled “Theological Assistance for the Philippines” (TAP).
- A committee of four members be appointed by Council to administer and oversee this project; this committee will report back to Council. Our pastor will not be a member of the committee, but may serve as an advisor.
- The mandate of this committee will include the following:
  - To assist Rev. Melo and others in the Philippines with Reformed theological training at the seminary level.
  - To coordinate with Rev. Melo and others regarding the theological training needed (course subjects, etc.).
  - To coordinate with the Baldivis FRCA on meeting these training needs. There is interest from Baldivis in working together on this.
  - To send personnel to the Philippines twice per year (for two weeks each time) to meet these needs.
    - Baldivis has indicated that they are also considering sending someone twice per year. This would mean theological training on a quarterly basis.
    - The personnel to be sent will not be limited to Rev. Bredenhof. In fact, he will only be able to meet a few of the needs. We will need others. Several other capable people have been approached and are willing to serve.
    - These personnel will serve on a volunteer basis.
  - To provide Reformed theological literature to pastors and theological students.
  - To explore other ways in which Reformed believers in Canada and the Philippines might bless and encourage one another mutually.
- TAP will cover the airfare; Filipinos will arrange and cover accommodations and food for training personnel.
- The budget for this project will (initially) be \$5000 per year.

- Where will this money come from? Streetlight is scaling back as it approaches institution. Rev. P. Aasman is available for call and hopes to receive a call in the next few months. We could set aside \$5000 from our existing mission budget for this project.
- \$5000 will be sufficient to send two men to the Philippines plus about \$2000 of theological books.
- There is also the possibility of seeking assistance from Word and Deed with funding.
- Timing: we propose that the first personnel be sent in 2014 and that this project have an initial three year life-span. The continuance of TAP will be reviewed in the fall of 2017.
- Once TAP is established, Providence should apply for membership in the recently-established Canadian Reformed Mission Association.
  - This will allow us to coordinate more effectively with other churches and mission boards with regard to available personnel for theological training. For instance, Cloverdale and Langley have been sending people to China for several years. There is a possibility of piggy-backing on that with certain subjects.

### Grounds

- Our sovereign God has placed Rev. Melo and other Filipino brothers and sisters on our path. We have a calling to act in love towards our neighbour in need and trust in God's guiding hand as we do so (Micah 6:8).
- We are blessed incredibly in our church. We have a rich heritage of biblical faith. We have an opportunity to share that heritage with those who are begging us to do so. Sharing our Reformed heritage will give gospel comfort to sinners and, above all, glory and praise to God.
- This project has the potential not only to bless our Filipino brothers and sisters, but also our own congregation here in Providence, as we learn from and participate in God's work in other lands.
- This project falls within the scope of our Providence vision to be an outwardly focussed church.
- While we do not have vast financial resources at our disposal, we do have access to valuable human resources that we can send and share for a limited duration.
- Computer technology (Skype, etc.) is limited in what it can provide in terms of theological training. This type of training is not only about communicating knowledge, but also imparting an ethos and providing personal mentoring. That can only be done effectively in person, with face-to-face interaction.

We submit this proposal respectfully for Council's consideration.

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